

Paul Rand:

A

*Designer's
Words*



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I had the courage or the
audacity or the stupidity
to take a chance.
I didn't know what the hell
would happen.

Interview with George Lois 1986

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Modernism

I haven't changed my mind about modernism from the first day I ever did it. . . . It means integrity; it means honesty; it means the absence of sentimentality and the absence of nostalgia; it means simplicity; it means clarity. That's what modernism means to me. . . .

Lecture *A Paul Rand Retrospective* Cooper Union, Oct 3 1996

Many people were doing modern stuff in England. But [E. McKnight] Kauffer was doing the best stuff. There wasn't anybody anywhere near him except for Cassandre. Kauffer gave Cassandre credit. He told me, "He's our father."

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

Can you think of anybody before 1920 who did anything that was remotely abstract in this country in terms of graphic design?

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

I never did calligraphy. . . . But handwriting is an entirely different kind of thing. It's part of the syndrome of modernism. . . . It's part of that asceticism.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

Good Design

Good design adds value of some kind, gives meaning, and, not incidentally, can be sheer pleasure to behold; it respects the viewer's sensibilities and rewards the entrepreneur.

Design Form and Chaos

Even if it is true that the average man seems most comfortable with the commonplace and familiar, it is equally true that catering to bad taste, which we so readily attribute to the average reader, merely perpetuates that mediocrity and denies the reader one of the most easily accessible means for aesthetic development and eventual enjoyment.

Thoughts on Design

The roots of good design lie in aesthetics: painting, drawing, and architecture, while those of business and market research are in demographics and statistics; aesthetics and business are traditionally incompatible disciplines.

Design Form and Chaos

Play

Without play, there would be no Picasso. Without play, there is no experimentation. Experimentation is the quest for answers.

Graphic Wit "Paul Rand: The Play Instinct" 1991

I use the term play, but I mean coping with the problems of form and content, weighing relationships, establishing priorities. Every problem of form and content is different, which dictates that the rules of the game are different too. *Graphic Wit* "Paul Rand: The Play Instinct" 1991

I don't think that play is done unwittingly. At any rate, one doesn't dwell over whether it's play or something more serious – one just does it.

Graphic Wit "Paul Rand: The Play Instinct" 1991

There are designers with a sense of humor and there are those without. Given the same content, the success is in the delivery. Groucho Marx can make anything funny, while others with similar material might just be tiresome. *Graphic Wit* "Paul Rand: The Play Instinct" 1991

I always steered towards humorous things. People who don't have a sense of humor really have serious problems.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

The visual message which professes to be profound or elegant often boomerangs as mere pretension; and the frame of mind that looks at humor as trivial and flighty mistakes the shadow for the substance. In short, the notion that the humorous approach to visual communication is undignified or belittling is sheer nonsense.

Thoughts on Design

I just like things that are playful; I like things that are happy; I like things that will make the client smile. . . .

Lecture *A Paul Rand Retrospective* Cooper Union, Oct 3 1996

Philosophy of Design

You have to sacrifice. There's no other way. . . .

Interview with George Lois 1986

Design is a way of life, a point of view. It involves the whole complex of visual communications: talent, creative ability, manual skill, and technical knowledge. Aesthetics and economics, technology and psychology are intrinsically related to the process.

Graphis "Politics of Design" 1981

To design is to transform prose into poetry.

Design Form and Chaos

Influences

I was apprenticed to George Switzer, who was influenced by French and German typographers. Among others, I was directly influenced by Piet Zwart, the Dutchman; El Lissitzky, the Russian; Moholy Nagy, the Hungarian; Jan Tschichold, the Czech; and Apollinaire, the Pole; not to mention the ancient Chinese and Persians.

Interview with George Lois 1986

Originality and Imitation

I was just doing what they were doing in Europe. I didn't claim that this was any great, original stuff, because it wasn't. It was influenced by Surrealism and Picasso.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

When I was doing the covers of *Direction* I was trying to compete with the Bauhaus, not with Norman Rockwell. I was trying to compete with Van Doesberg and Leger and Picasso. "Compete" is not the right word. I was trying to do it in their spirit.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Mies van der Rohe once said that being good is more important than being original. Originality is a product, not an intention.

Graphic Wit "Paul Rand: The Play Instinct" 1991

A cigar is almost as commonplace as an apple, but if I fail to make ads for cigars that are lively and original, it will not be the cigar that is at fault.

Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Special Issue: "The Visual Arts Today" Winter 1960

The idea of imitation is very prominent in modernism. You don't imitate anything.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

A designer might be guided somewhat in the way he plans the book from the description of the bygone era, but to simulate that period is absurd.

Problems in Book Design
"Book Binding and Book Production" October 1945

Innovation leads one to see the new in the old and distinguishes the ingenious from the ingenuous.

Design Form and Chaos

Education

Albers wanted me to teach at Black Mountain, and I didn't want to go. Well, actually I didn't feel that I was good enough to teach.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

I would say that an understanding of man's intrinsic needs, and of the necessity to search for a climate in which those needs could be realized, is fundamental to the education of the designer. It is only when man (and the hordes of individuals that term stands for) is not accepted as the center of human concern that it becomes feasible to create a system of production which values profit out of proportion to responsible public service, or to design ads in which the only aesthetic criterion is "How sexy is the girl?"

Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Special Issue: "The Visual Arts Today" Winter 1960

I don't know of any other way of teaching art except by criticizing. Theories, when you're teaching art, have to come later, not before. . . . [Alfred North] Whitehead says that theory is fine, but it must be connected with practice. Otherwise it's meaningless.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Teaching art (design), perhaps more than other disciplines, involves a special kind of commitment from both teacher and student. Most complex is the task of formulating the problem. Ideally, an assignment should be . . . palatable, challenging, and absorbing, inviting curiosity and encouraging exploration. It should deal not only with formal but manual skills.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

There are two aspects to design. . . . One is the formal, which is teachable. You can talk about patterns and you can talk about contrasts. . . . But teaching ideas is something else. That's practically impossible, except in a flip, superficial way. . . .

Interview with George Lois 1986

The practice of design – the art of communication – is sorely lacking a *means* of communication, a language to make the practice of and discussions about design clear and interesting.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

When to use computers is certainly as important as how to use them. In the school environment, they should be a part of the curriculum but not *the* curriculum: nothing can replace the hand in the early stages of design education.

Design Form and Chaos

Learning

Visual things have to be seen. That's the reason there are so few books on the subject that are meaningful. And even if they are meaningful, they don't help you much, because you still have to have talent and instinct. A book is not going to teach a dog how to be a horse.

Interview with George Lois 1986

I started reading because of a remark of Moholy Nagy. . . . I remember, Moholy asked me, "Do you read art criticism?" And I said, "No." The only thing he said was, "Pity."

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Functionalism

Ideally, beauty and utility are mutually generative. In the past, rarely was beauty an end in itself.

Thoughts on Design

If I was influenced by anything, it was architecture: structure having to do with logic. If you don't do it right, the whole thing is going to cave in. In a certain sense, you can carry that to graphic design. Fortunately, however, nobody is going to die if you do it wrong. But that's also one of the difficulties. There's no natural check on the work.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Functionalism does not preclude beauty, but it does not guarantee it either.

Print January/February 1960

Preoccupation with any one element of a visual object at the expense of others is impoverishing, and poverty. . . is not a virtue of design.

Print January/February 1960

I do what I think is practical, what I think will work, what I think people will understand. I don't consider it high art or great art; it's just the best I can do. *Lecture A Paul Rand Retrospective* Cooper Union, Oct 3 1996

Symbols

It is in symbolic, visual terms that the designer ultimately realizes his perceptions and experiences; and it is in a world of symbols that man lives. The symbol is thus the common language between artist and spectator.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

The trademark becomes doubly meaningful when it is used both as an identifying device and as an illustration, each working hand in hand to enhance and dramatize the effect of the whole.

The Trademark as an Illustrative Device

Systematization

There's a natural need for order. Whether you like it or not, you live by a system. Even if you think that systems are stupid, you have breakfast every morning, and you go to the john, and you go to sleep, and that's a system.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

People mistake a system for something that has to be adhered to, which is stupid. Even Le Corbusier said, about the modular, "If you don't want it, to hell with it." And I think that's how you have to edit a system. Otherwise, you may as well walk around in a striped suit.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Grids

I don't sit down and start with grids – although I do grids all the time. Sometimes maybe I don't use them, or maybe I don't use them properly, but who cares? I want to know I can start the margin always in the same place, and then I use my different vertical and horizontal nodal points for different things. And that's a help! You wouldn't know it after it's done, but that's the way I did it.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Swiss Design

When I was first aware of what the Swiss were doing, I used to ridicule it. I used to yodel and say, "My God, here they come again." I really felt that the stuff was cold, and all the other clichés people use to describe Swiss design. But then I changed completely. . . . Granted that there is a lot of lousy, very stiff and very cold stuff. But there is no counterpart to Swiss design in terms of something that you can describe, that you can follow, that you can systematically understand. It just makes sense.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

As Cubism is to modern painting, the so-called Swiss style is to modern typography and design.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

Aesthetics

Aesthetics is the language of appearances – of art, design, the beautiful, and the ugly. . . . To talk about, study, teach or criticize a work of art, focus must always be on problems of form in relation, of course, to a particular content.

Unpublished addendum to *From Lascaux to Brooklyn*

Simplicity is never a goal; it is a by-product of a good idea and modest expectations.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Design Ingredients

Form and content are interactive; they are mutually dependent. Insofar as form manipulates content, content determines the nature of its manipulation.

Design Form and Chaos

Pictures, abstract symbols, materials, and colors are among the ingredients with which a designer or engineer works. To design is to discover relationships and to make arrangements and rearrangements among these ingredients.

Design Form and Chaos

The principal role of a logo is to identify, and simplicity is its means. . . . Its effectiveness depends on distinctiveness, visibility, adaptability, memorability, universality, and timelessness.

Design Form and Chaos

Editing is a very important aspect of designing.

Interview with George Lois 1986

Pictures are not surrogates for words, nor are words surrogates for pictures.

Interview with George Lois 1986

Inspiration

The source of the creative impulse is a mystery. . . . Ideas may come from anywhere, anything, any time, any place. . . . [Often] they spring from rather unromantic, sometimes unexpected, or even unsavory sources.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

Ideas may also grow out of the problem itself, which in turn becomes part of the solution.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

Ideas are fuel for the imagination; they are the unique response to a meaningful question.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

The artist is by necessity a collector; he accumulates things with the same ardor and curiosity [with which] a boy stuffs his pockets. He borrows from the sea and from the scrap heap; he takes snapshots, makes mental notes, and records impressions on tablecloths and newspapers – why one particular thing and not another, he may not know at the time, but he is omnivorous. He has a taste for children's wall scrawling as appreciative as that for prehistoric cave painting.

ID "Paul Rand: Ideas about Ideas" 1955

Our democracy and competitive form of economic life should promote a vital and diverse commercial art; instead, we often find it more difficult to sell original ideas than pedestrian ones.

Art in Advertising August 1954

Personal preferences, prejudices, and stereotypes often dictate what a logo looks like, but it is *needs* not wants, *ideas* not type styles that determine what its form should be.

Design Form and Chaos

Goo and Rococo

In the West we look at art through life. Well, that's one way of living. In the Orient they look at life through art. They even drink their tea without sugar, for the same reason that they don't like a lot of frilly decoration on a painting. I can't stand butter on my bread for the same reason. I'm allergic to goo and rococo.

PM (daily newspaper) April 20 1947

Designer as Artist

I just always was interested in art. It's like asking me how do I have breakfast; you know, you just have it.

Lecture A Paul Rand Retrospective Cooper Union, Oct 3 1996

I think that unless the thing is practical, it's not art. Because that quality that makes art is the fact that it works. You can do abstract things and everything looks lovely, but it doesn't do a bloody thing. The art comes in the ingenuity of a designer who is able to, in a way, conceal art as a service to business. The guy who can really make it work is the real artist.

Interview with George Lois 1986

The other side of the coin is to be a Sunday painter, which is the most depressing idea there is. . . . Because it means that the rest of the week is futile. . . .

Interview with George Lois 1986

That graphic design is generally considered a minor art has more to do with posturing than it does with reality. The paucity of great art is no more prevalent among designers than it is among painters.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

The great lesson of the cave paintings of Lascaux is that art is an intuitive, autonomous, and timeless activity and works independently of the development of society.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Unlike the practitioners of *l'art pour l'art*, I believe what determines the status of art is not genre but quality.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Grace, dignity, passion, and pleasure signal the presence and suffuse the atmosphere of anything worthy of the accolade *art*: a persuasive poster, a painting, an elegant room, a Gothic cathedral, or a simple utensil.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Creativity

The role of the imagination is to create new meanings and to discover connections that, even if obvious, seem to escape detection. Imagination begins with intuition, not the intellect.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

The impetus to conform, so widespread today, will, if not checked, kill all forms of creativity.

Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Special Issue: "The Visual Arts Today" Winter 1960

Innovation distinguishes the leader from the follower, never satisfied with what has been, but intent on what will be. It is the driving force of the creative spirit, sensitive to change and the changeless. It focuses not only on what is right, but on what is exceptional. Surprise, not predictability, is its hallmark.

Design Form and Chaos

I hate words that are abused, like "creativity."

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Rationalization

All creative art is intuitive. So if it's intuitive, how do you know why you do something? You know why you do something after the fact, then you make up all kinds of stories about it.

Lecture *A Paul Rand Retrospective* Cooper Union, Oct 3 1996

Design History

One cannot deprecate the contributions made by such men as Goudy, Rogers, Dwiggins, Cleland, etc. To say, however, that any of these men are creative in the vernacular of the twentieth century is certainly an error in classification. For these men, who are perpetuating the past, are in a sense, historians. . . . [They] have made little or no contribution to the understanding of the plastic arts in relation to our new, dynamic conception of space.

American Printer "What is 'Modern' Typography?" 1948

Most of us are perhaps too dependent on our elders, and are inclined to glorify almost anything that has been done before, simply because it has preceded us in terms of time.

American Printer "What is 'Modern' Typography?" 1948

It is a mistake to think that the modern typographer does not have a healthy respect for tradition.

American Printer "What is 'Modern' Typography?" 1948

Nostalgia

Sentimentality provides only a momentary response to a work of art; nostalgia provides a momentary escape from reality.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Timelessness

You look at most of the work of Lissitzky, it doesn't look dated. And I'm not talking about that poster with the two heads. That was lousy from the first day that it was done, except that it was powerful. Visually it was a repulsive idea. But good work has a universal and timeless character. I mean, Bruegel and Titian and Mozart, they're not dated! As against, for example, the English Pre-Raphaelites. It's very skillful. But the whole thing makes you sick.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

One quickly realizes that simplicity and geometry are the language of timelessness and universality.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Style

A style is the consequence of recurrent habits, restraints, or rules invented or inherited, written or overheard, intuitive or preconceived.

AIGA Journal "Good Design Is Good Will" 1987

It has never been my belief that the designer who confined himself to "modernism," realism, traditionalism, or plain old-fashioned fuddy-duddyism was justified in considering his favored style of design the perfect medium for any problem that came along. The style of design is often determined by the particular problem of the advertiser. Although my preference is in the direction of "modernism," I firmly believe that the taste, ingenuity, and integrity of the designer determine good design, and these factors overshadow the question of "style."

Type Talks "The Story of a Symbol" May 1949

The great art style of any period is that which relates to the true insight of its time. But an age may repudiate its real insights, retreat to the insights of the past – which, though not its own, seem safer to act upon.

A Critique of the 1948 AIGA Fifty Books Show

Advertising

My orientation is strictly formal; that is, art. It is not advertising and not business. When I do a job, if I want to think of somebody, I never think of an advertising guy.

Interview with George Lois 1986

Trends

People latch on to trends, and it has nothing to do with real problems. It's something that's superimposed on a problem. It has to do with being part of the scene, or doing what is the latest thing to do.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Bringing to fruition new ideas and forms is not only arduous but less rewardingly glamorous than was participation in the original dramatic and dynamic insurgence. Consequently, many designers and typographers have shirked this task. Some who originally accepted this task have since abandoned it. Some have contracted the “revolutionary habit” of novelty-making – indulging in a sort of perpetual juvenilism. Other designers, unable to escape the “academic habit,” have too soon crystallized the theories of the aesthetic revolution into a set of rules and dogma.

Typographica 5 “Modern Typography in the Modern World” 1952

Innovation is the enemy of trendiness, pretense, and timidity. It recognizes the genuine from the spurious. It tantalizes the viewer, stimulates the mind, intensifies meaning, generates interest, and is at the heart of both better design and better business.

Design Form and Chaos

Research

There is no science in advertising.

Interview with George Lois 1986

The designer is not always right. The researcher is not always wrong. Profit is not always the motive; market research, whatever its outcome, should never be used as a good excuse for bad design – in the same sense that good design should never be used to promote a bad product.

Design Form and Chaos

Commercial Art

You're not doing museum stuff; whatever you're doing should communicate, so the guy on the street should know what the heck you're trying to sell.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

I don't consider myself a huckster. I consider myself somebody who contributes something to the quality of life.

Interview with George Lois 1986

To see the commercial artist as nothing but a pitchman is a little too glib; the “nothing but” part of it is the part that could be wrong. What about the special skills of the commercial artist, his way with type and typography, his knowledge of reproduction processes, his design ability, his showmanship . . . and, yes, his salesmanship.

American Artist October 1970

Who knows why a product sells? There are millions of reasons why things sell that have nothing to do with art or design. If you gave the consumer a deal – 50 percent off – you'd sell like hell, regardless of whether it was abstract or concrete.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

. . . the plethora of bad design that we see all around us can probably be attributed as much to good salesmanship as to bad taste.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

Means and Methods

I never actually operated like an art director except in rare cases. Most of the work I did myself.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

I have never known what to charge. Every time I charge something, it's sort of a guessing game.

Interview with George Lois 1986

Copywriters hated me because most of the time I disagreed with them. They'd come in with their yellow pad and a rough layout . . . like I was a printer on Pitkin Avenue. And I refused. Many times I even refused to use their copy because I thought it was lousy, and I'd rewrite the headline. I never bothered with the text.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

People think in very simple, literal ways. If you're talking about cereal, you show a mother and her little kid eating cereal. What's more appropriate? But is that the best way to sell cereal? Maybe it is. I doubt it. Dramatizing a bowl of cereal, and dramatizing the luscious cornflakes is a lot more convincing than just showing a mother and child eating cereal. The ramifications of marketing are too complicated for a simple mind like mine to delve into. I think you have to deal with a psychologist or a sociologist, and even they would give you a lot of guesses.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

The Client

. . . [m]any times "it's too modern" simply means that the client does not know what he is really objecting to.

Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences
Special Issue: "The Visual Arts Today" Winter 1960

What the designer and his client have in common is a license to practice without a license.

Design Form and Chaos

I believe that design quality is proportionately related to the distance that exists between the designer and the management at the top. The closer this relationship, the more likely chances are for a meaningful design.

Design Form and Chaos

Credit

I always insisted on signing my work. I remember being called into Bill's [Weintraub] office one day. There was the first Dubonnet ad I signed, and he wanted me to take my name off, so that the glow would not be on me – it would be on the agency. I said, "Bill, this is your agency; you take my name off, and you can take it off your register, too – I'm getting out." And he didn't take it off. If a client had wanted it off, that's something else.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

I signed [my work] simply as a way of publicizing myself.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

William Bernbach

Bill [Bernbach] understood the designer, what his role was, and let him do his job – he looked at that big picture. That's not a bad picture.

Interview with George Lois 1986

The myth is that he taught me everything that I know.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

Presentation

I never make a presentation personally. I usually send it in the mail . . . because if it's going to be rejected I don't want to be there. But more importantly, I think that the thing has to stand on its own merits. I've seen skillful presentations made by people doing terrible work. . . . People spend money making presentations with three-dimensional things and lights and theatrical effects, dancing girls and music. . . .

Artograph No. 6, 1988

A presentation is the musical accompaniment of design. A presentation that lacks an idea cannot hide behind glamorous photos, pizzazz, or ballyhoo.

Design Form and Chaos

Corporate Image

Unless it consistently represents the aims and beliefs as well as the total activity and production of a company, a corporate image is at best mere window dressing, and at worst deception.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

A trademark is not merely a device to adorn a letterhead, to stamp on a product, or to insert at the base of an advertisement; nor one whose sole prerogative is to imprint itself by dint of constant repetition on the mind of the consumer public. The trademark is a potential illustrative feature of unappreciated vigor and efficacy, and when used as such escapes its customary fate of being a boring restatement of the identity of the product's maker. When fully exploited the trademark can actively stimulate interest in the product or brand.

The Trademark as an Illustrative Device

A trademark, which is subject to an infinite number of uses, abuses, and variations . . . cannot survive unless it is designed with utmost simplicity and restraint. . . .

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

There are as many reasons for designing a new logo, or updating an old one, as there are opinions. The belief that a new or updated design will, like a talisman, magically turn around any business is not uncommon. A redesigned logo may have the advantage of implying something new, something improved – but this boost is temporary unless the company lives up to these dreams.

Design Form and Chaos

If in the business of communications, “image is king,” the essence of this image, the logo, is the jewel in its crown.

Design Form and Chaos

Rodents

The *Direction* cover, the one with the rat-face of Hitler, was a pretty nice drawing. I hated to do it because I hate rats and I hated Hitler. But it was a rat with a Hitler moustache.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Collage

Collage is a very ingenious kind of method of working because it abbreviates the time it takes to express a meaning by the process of juxtaposition. If you want to say something quickly, collage is a very good method and stylistically it's always terrific even if you're a lousy designer. *FIT Network* Spring 1994

In one sense montage and collage are integrated visual arrangements in space, and in another sense, absorbing visual tests which the spectator may perceive and decipher for himself. He may thus participate directly in the creative process.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

Typography

The history of the typographic arts in America is the history of a struggle between the craftsman and the creative artist, between common sense and sentimentality, tradition and progress, prejudice and tolerance.

Penrose Annual “Paul Rand: A Commentary on Modern and Traditional Typography in America” 1949

The difference between modern and traditional typography is not the difference between apples and oranges. It is more like the difference between Granny Smith and Golden Delicious.

AIGA Journal “Good Design Is Good Will” 1987

Disputes arising between the two schools of typographic thought, the traditional on the one hand and the modern on the other, are, it seems to me, the fruits of misplaced emphasis. I believe the real difference lies in the way “space” is interpreted: that is, the way an image is placed on a sheet of paper. Such incidental questions as the use of sans-serif typefaces, lowercase letters, ragged settings, primary colors, etc., are at best variables that tend merely to sidetrack the real issue.

Thoughts on Design

If statistics were available, it is reasonable to estimate that in the United States the traditional typographer outnumbers the modern typographic artist by 1000 to 1.

Penrose Annual “Paul Rand: A Commentary on Modern and Traditional Typography in America” 1949

I know people who have religiously used only sans serif, who suddenly switched to Times Roman. Now, the reason they switched to Times Roman is for the same reason they used sans serif. They considered sans serif very functional, devoid of doodads and ringlets and hair curlers. . . . There is no typeface that is more reasonable than Times Roman. But let's face it, Times Roman is ugly, especially in the big sizes.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

I respect people who can do traditional typography, in a way, more than some people who do so-called “modern” typography.

Interview with George Lois 1986

A typeface which sometimes is described as having character often is merely bizarre, eccentric, nostalgic, or simply buckeye.

Thoughts on Design

Typography, symmetrical or not, is an abstract art.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Asymmetry

Asymmetric balance creates greater reader interest. Pleasure derived from observing asymmetrical arrangements lies partly in overcoming resistances, which, consciously or not, the spectator adjusts in his own mind.

American Printer “What is ‘Modern’ Typography?” 1948

Computers

The big problem is that the speed with which this machine operates is so fast that the normal contemplative time that one needs to do a design that makes any sense is not there. When you're sitting and drawing you make a stroke and you fill in areas. There's a time element involved. But with the computer, that time element does not exist. It takes up your physical, spiritual, and psychological time and your design time is just not there.

FIT Network Spring 1994

It's dancing before you can walk. It's doing all kinds of tricks that are useless tricks just for the sake of doing the tricks, not for the sake of solving the problem.

Interview with Steven Heller 1988

Without the aesthetic, the computer is but a mindless speed machine, producing effects without substance, form without relevant content, or content without meaningful form.

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Today the designer must understand the relation between aesthetics (the designer's *raison d'être*) and the computer (often his livelihood).

From Lascaux to Brooklyn

Thoughts on Design

I resisted that whole business. I said I wasn't a writer. So the publisher hired a free-lance writer who came up to the house one day and we sat down and talked. I was talking about all the concepts, and she said, "You don't need me. Why don't you just do it yourself?" And I did.

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

I did the book because I am a very practical guy, and I knew this was one way to have all your work in one place, so if you ever run into a fire you don't have to worry about your samples!

Interview with Steven Heller 1987

A Designer's Art

My interest has always been in restating the validity of those ideas which, by and large, have guided artists since the time of Polyclitus. I believe that it is only in the application of those timeless principles that one can even begin to achieve a semblance of quality in one's work. It is the continuing relevance of these ideals that I mean to emphasize, especially to those who have grown up in a world of punk and graffiti.

Paul Rand: A Designer's Art

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